



# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

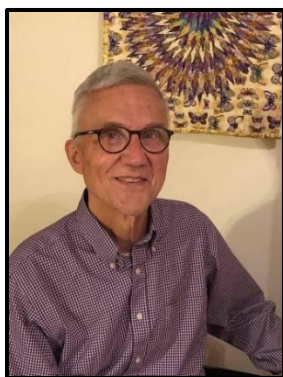
EST. 1909

# First Press

THE NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, TURLOCK

*To BE a Testimony of Christ's LOVE and GOODNESS  
as we Encourage and Uphold the  
BODY OF CHRIST*

## JANUARY 2024



Grace and peace to you,

As we enter the New Year, I want to offer you God's blessing, and my best wishes for your life in 2024!

I also want to call your attention to January 6th, the Day of Epiphany. While Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus, the

One we call the Christ, Epiphany celebrates the manifestation of his glory, the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ. As the prologue in the Gospel of John says, *"We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."* (John 1:14, NIV)

The day of Epiphany is celebrated as the manifestation of Christ, particularly to the Gentiles, as represented by the Magi. (Matthew 2:1-12) The phenomenon of Christian Epiphany (or recognizing the glory of God in Jesus) has echoes in the Old Testament, too, especially in the Psalms.

*"Ascribe to the Lord, the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness."*  
(Psalm 29:2, NIV)

The Greek root of the English word "doxology" is associated with praise. What is familiarly known among many Christians as "The Doxology" tells us to praise God "above the heavenly host". People who are steeped in the language of the New Testament say that the praise called for in the Doxology, means literally "to speak glory."

In a line central to the words of Handel's "Messiah", the prophet Isaiah is quoted.

In the first of the Servant Songs, Isaiah foretells of the coming Messiah as one whose reign will lift every valley and make the mountains low. (Isaiah 40:4)

That prophecy offers a clue to the significance of Epiphany, when the Wisemen (sometimes known as the Magi or Kings) followed a star to Bethlehem. Long before that day when God's glory was manifest in the birth of Jesus Christ, Isaiah had prophesied that the Messiah would be persuasive and powerful enough to elevate the downtrodden while humbling even those of the highest status.

Perhaps the best part of the good news Epiphany offers, is that something is asked of us. The glory and phenomena of Epiphany seek our cooperation. God desires our willingness to be those people who are lifted when we are low, and humbled when we are haughty, to the end that we may live together in God's goodness and glory.

In Christ,

*Pastor Steve Smith*



## ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

January 28, 2024

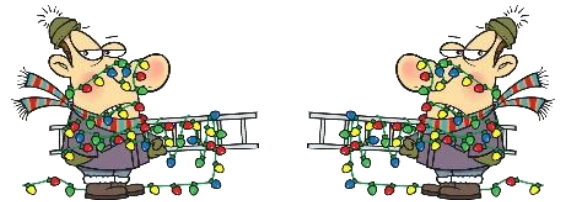
11:00 am

Following the  
10:00 am  
Worship Service

Our business will include the election of officers, evaluation and review of our finances and celebrating the achievements of all our ministries in 2023! We will also take a vote on the Terms of Pastoral call as well as look forward to the 2024 budget and electing a nominating committee for 2024.

## CHRISTMAS DE-GREENING

Let's have fun together in taking down our Christmas Decorations in the sanctuary and the Narthex! Please join us on **Sunday, January 7th at 11:00 am** immediately following our worship service. Lunch will be provided to all the participants by the Fellowship Committee.



# 2<sup>nd</sup> FRIDAYS Fellowship

Perfect  
**Potluck**  
**GAME NIGHT**

JOIN IN THE FUN & feel free to bring either an appetizer, a main dish, dessert, and a beverage to share. Kindly RSVP to Cyndi Sims by **Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>** of your attendance.

<b>JANUARY</b>	<b>FPC VOIGHT HALL</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b>
<b>12</b>	2619 N. Berkeley	<b>6:00</b>
<b>2024</b>	Turlock, California	<b>PM</b>

## JOIN US FOR



# MEN'S BREAKFAST

Faith + Food + Fellowship

**EVERY WEDNESDAY  
MORNINGS  
9:00 AM  
VOIGHT HALL  
FOR A TIME OF  
DEVOTION  
GOOD FOOD  
FELLOWSHIP**

PW Women's Bible Study meets on the third Wednesday morning of the month. Our next gathering will take place on Wednesday, January 17, at 10:30 am in Voight Hall. There will be a Zoom link available for those that need that option. This month's lesson is titled, "Mary and Martha Encounter Jesus." The scripture passage is Luke 10: 38-42. The main idea: Jesus calls us to value the role of each person in the community of faith.

Introducing the 2023-24 PW/Horizons Bible Study: Sacred Encounters: The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts authored by Olive Mahabir. In the nine lessons of this Bible study – the author invites readers to consider Jesus, "the good shepherd" (Luke 10: 15), who shared the Good News through sacred encounters with everyday people. The Gospel according to Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, or Luke-Acts "one story in two parts," demonstrate the unfolding of God's redemptive purposes in human history and present a distinctive perspective on the person and work of Jesus Christ. Written by Luke, a physician and traveling companion of Paul, the message to the early Christian community (and to us) is radical, inclusive, and hope filled. Further, this message invites the church to deeper, compassionate engagement with the world. "What are the potential implications for the church if we treat our interactions as sacred encounters that demonstrate the transformative love of Christ Jesus?"

All women of the church are welcome to attend. We encourage you to bring a friend.

*For any questions or more information, please contact Candace Peterson.*

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## 🎵 Notes from the Music Room 🎵

### HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL!

It is with great excitement and anticipation that I greet the New Year! Why? Because there is an entire YEAR that stretches out before us! What does God have planned for each one of us? Where will we be? What will we be doing?

In the Music Department, there is much to consider. What anthems to sing? Happy ones that let us rejoice with God through the great times of our lives? Or those which encourage us to lean on God's comforting arms for solace during the difficult times? What is most important to remember is that God is with us through every season of our lives!

So come – join with your community of faith – laugh together – and just BE together as we WORSHIP together, in the Word of God, and the music we have which has been inspired by God! The prophet Isaiah has said:

*Shout for JOY, O heavens!  
Rejoice O earth;  
Burst into song, O mountains!  
For the LORD comforts His people  
And will have compassion on His afflicted ones!*  
Isaiah 49:13

Rev. Wendy Warner  
Director of Music

# Mission Ministry



A BIG thank you to everyone that participated in our annual Mission Faire that was held to support local, national and international mission projects. The Mission Faire was very successful again this year as **\$6,143** was donated to the many mission causes listed below. Plus, the Gifts for Kids toys and clothing purchase by our members for 17 children from Sierra Vista group homes and Creative Alternatives boys' group home next door to FPC.

In addition, SERRV International's handmade goods sales of items that are Fair Trade and eco-friendly raised \$820!

Thanks to Polet Yonan, Kathleen Gunn and Kim Sassman for representing this nonprofit organization's return to the Mission Faire.

Youth Mission Scholarship	\$ 900
Gifts for Kids	\$ 768
Heifer Project	\$ 750
Presbyterian Gift Giving Catalog	\$ 945
Presby. Disaster Relief for Maui	\$ 930
Ben & Emily Guatemala	\$ 720
Turlock Gospel Mission	\$ 520
TGM Meal Ministry	\$ 610
Love Justice	\$ 145
<b>2023 Grand Total</b>	<b>\$6,143</b>

Thanks again for all of your generous support of FPC's 2023 Mission Faire.

And very special thanks to our Deacons, especially Darlene Runsten, for the hand-tied blankets which were gifted to the kids at Creative Alternatives and Sierra Vista group homes.



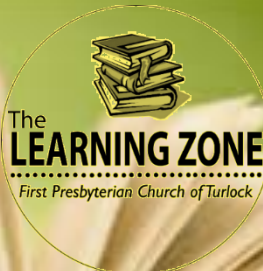
The Christmas Gifts for the Berkeley Lodge



The Christmas Gifts for Sierra Vista Delivery

*A teacher affects eternity,  
he can never tell where his influence stops.*

*~ Henry B. Adams*



**We Resume Back**  
**Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup>**  
**3:30 - 5:00 pm**

**Continuous Need for Healthy**  
**Snacks for 36 Students &**  
**Substitute Tutors**

**Please let**  
**Stephanie Anderson**  
**know if you like to help**



The children & Youth Ministry is looking for more volunteers to help with Sunday School, Children's & Youth programs on Wednesday evenings from 5:00-6:30pm.

Please feel welcome to use your gifts in sharing God's Word with the young ones of our congregation.

Please see Candace Peterson.

# BIG WEDNESDAY

The date to start our BIG Wednesday program is yet to be determined. We will keep you posted with more information soon to follow. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Youth Group is in need of a permanent adult leader! We thank everyone who have stepped up in this past year to help with keeping the program intact. Stephanie Anderson continues to plan events and make sure there are volunteers for each weekly meeting.

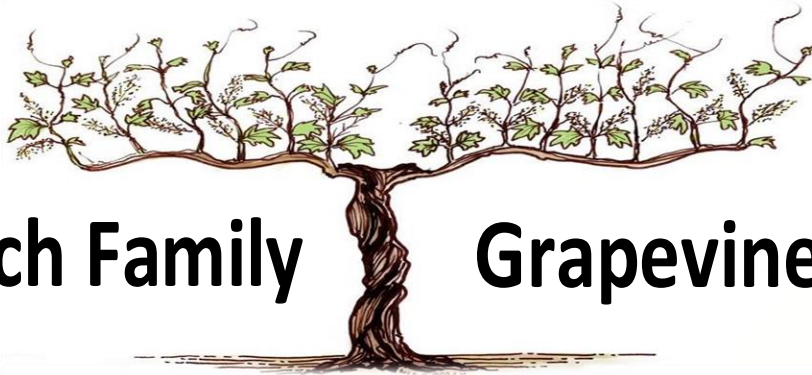
If you feel led to take on this task in supporting our youth as they grow into mature Christians facing a challenging world, please contact Candace Peterson or Stephanie Anderson. Thank your all for your support.

# CHILDREN'S Sunday School

Sunday Church School meets during worship every Sunday in Room 3 of the Marsh Building. The children are working on an Old Testament survey for 3rd through 7th grades, called The Bible -- The Story of God's Faithfulness.

**More children are always welcome.**

## Church Family Grapevine



### Ongoing Prayer Needs Key Code:

P-Personal, F-Family, G-Grief, H-Health, S-Surgery, PG- Pregnancy, E-Employment, ST-Safe Travel, A-Adoption, SA-Salvation, M-Military

Blixt, Elizabeth (H)

Brugger, Betty (H)

Callahan, Julie(H)

### Haug, Roy & Family (G)

Josh, Sheila (S,H)

Lowe, Marge (H)

Marsh, Lois (H)

Narita, Leona (H)

Reeves, Jean (H)

Runsten, Tricia (Darlene's Daughter) (H)

### Seaver, Nancy & Family (G)

Taylor, Paul (H)

Ulrich, SaraLee (H)

*Please praise God continuously for who He is and what He has done in your life...  
Blessed is His Holy Name.*



### Birthdays

Jan 1 Betty Brugger  
Jan. 10 Darcel Sanders  
Jan 11 Noelle Hazelton  
Jan 14 Caleb Staley  
Jan 18 Lorna Schmidt  
Jan 20 Sheila Josh  
Jan 21 Pat Wallace  
Jan 24 Cyndi Sims  
Jan 31 Martin Purdy

### Anniversaries

Jan 16 John & Cyndi Sims

*If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please contact the church office.*

# NEED PRAYER?

*We are here to pray for you.*



First United Presbyterian Church is a praying family. Please let the church office know of your prayer needs and we will gladly add your name to our prayer chain.

## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Session last met on December 19, 2023.

Of interest:

- A work group from Session was appointed to review Big Wednesday dinner (Candace Peterson, Adria Sanders, and John Sims).
- Approved to accept the Donation and Gift Acceptance Policy Draft and the Capital Improvement Fund—Establishment and Policies Draft for action at the January Session meeting.
- Approved to establish a third Worship Technician to work in the sound booth.
- Approved a tentative 2024 budget. Final budget to be approved at the January Session meeting.

First Presbyterian Church will hold its annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 28, 2024, directly after worship. We will be electing new church officers, corporation officers, and the 2024 Nominating Committee.

On behalf of Session, thank you for your continuing support of the mission and ministries of First Presbyterian Church.

In HIS service,

Pat Wallace  
Clerk of Session

## DEACON MINISTRY

Deacons did not have a meeting in December, but we were involved with cutting and tying blankets for 18 children as part of the Missions Faire. Huge thanks to all the ladies who assisted in the blanket tying project: Susan England, Alison Aldax, Cyndi Sims, Elaine Neely, Joyce Erickson, Barbara Bort, Polet Yonan, Pat Rubalcava, and Darlene Runsten. You are all wonderful! *(My sincere apologies if I left someone's name of this list.)*

Our next meeting will be held at 11:15 a.m. in the tutoring on Sunday, January 14, 2024, after the church service. This will be our last meeting with our Deacon Class of 2023.

In Christ,

Darlene Runsten, Moderator

## FINANCE UPDATE

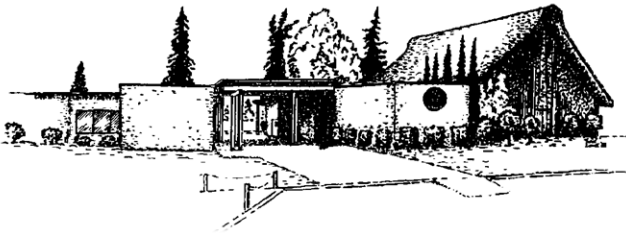
January through November 2023

Contributions:	\$242,558
Other Income:	\$44,144
Total Income:	\$286,702
Expenses:	\$256,062
Excess Income:	\$30,640

We are grateful for the continued financial contributions to our church. November income was \$37,051 and expenses were \$14,421 resulting in excess income of \$22,630. Our staff and committees are doing a fantastic job of managing expenses and our income was \$6,282 over budget. We are thankful that we will be able to pay for all of our mission agreements, FPC's gift that assists those in need. We look forward to the Christmas season and prayerfully complete our year with continued financial blessings.

Thanks to you all!

May the New  
Year bring you  
happiness,  
peace, and  
prosperity.  
Wishing you a  
joyous 2024!



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**First Presbyterian Church**  
 2619 N. Berkeley Avenue  
 Turlock, CA 95382

**Worship Service at 10AM**  
 Phone # (209) 202-3977  
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 Website: [www.fpturlock.com](http://www.fpturlock.com)

Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/firstpresbyterianchurch](http://www.facebook.com/firstpresbyterianchurch)



Church Staff
Interim Pastor: Rev. Dr. Stephen Smith
Administrative Assistant: Polet Yonan
Bookkeeper: Kim Sasman
Youth Ministry Director: Stephanie Anderson
Director of Music: Rev. Wendy Warner
Organist: Barbara Bort
Child Care: Rebecca Staley
Janitor: Michael Morris

ELECTED DEACONS AND SESSION OFFICERS		
<u>Elders</u> <u>Class of 2023</u> Michael Betts Donna Harrison Candace Peterson John Sims	<u>Elders</u> <u>Class of 2024</u> Mark Aldax Kathleen Gunn Marilyn Hoobyar Priscilla Peters	<u>Elders</u> <u>Class of 2025</u> Dan Hardesty Adria Sanders Jerel Steckling Pat Wallace
<u>Deacons</u> <u>Class of 2023</u> Alison Aldax Marlana Mizicko Kendra Reyes Darlene Runsten Cyndi Sims Lisa Wellman	<u>Deacons</u> <u>Class of 2024</u> Brent Harrison Donna Lansing Elaine Neely Pat Rubalcava Nancy Seaver Meghan Young	<u>Deacons</u> <u>Class of 2025</u> Bill Bishop Niki Higdon Jana Purdy Jeannie Staley